

The Chicago Blackhawks: 1926-1936 The First Decade

Bryne Hadnott

Brookwood Junior High School, Glenwood

Teacher: Harry Daley

In 1920, Americans in New England were already used to Canada's leading sport: hockey. In 1926, Chicago became one of the National Hockey League (NHL) franchises. They were founded in September 25, 1926. The NHL gave a franchise to Major Frederic McLaughlin. He purchased the

Portland Rosebuds and came up with a new name, the Black Hawks in honor of a chief of the Sank Indians. Ever since, the Blackhawks have been one of the most famous hockey teams in the country.

Mayor Fred McLaughlin's wife is credited with designing the Indian head that is featured on every Chicago Blackhawk's jersey. On November 17, 1926, the Chicago Blackhawks showed off their new uniforms when they played their first game at the Chicago Coliseum. It was against the Toronto St. Pats. At the end of the night, the game was 4-1 Blackhawks. When the end of the season came the Blackhawks record that year was a dismal 19 wins, 22 losses and 3 ties. The team included Dick Irvin, Cecil Dye, George Hay, Charles McVeigh, Bob Trapp, Duke Dutwoski, Jack Riley, Percy Traub, Ken Doraty, George McFarland, Art Townshend, and Hugh Lehman. In 1927, McLaughlin hired his new coach. Barney Stanley.

In the second season, 1927, the Blackhawks won seven games and won the same amount in 1928. For eight games, the Blackhawks never scored a goal and scored only 33 by the end of the season. The Blackhawks' record of 7-34-3 left them unqualified for the Stanley Cup Playoffs.

After another season passed, another coach was fired. Shaughnessy became the new coach. The season opened with a game against Montreal in a 4-4 tie. On December 15, the Chicago

Stadium hosted a hockey game against Pittsburgh in a 3-1 Blackhawks' victory after Chicago won four other games. During Boxing Day, the Blackhawks won another game against Montreal Canadians 4-3. In mid-season two events astounded Chicagoans, the Blackhawks were in second place with a record of 11-8-3 and Coach Shaughnessy left the team, leaving direction to Bill Tobin, the new coach. In another win for the Blackhawks. Chicago defeated Boston 3-2 on March 13, 1929. Overall, the Blackhawks did better this season by coming in second a 21-18-5, but failed at the Stanley Cup Playoffs.

In 1930, Dick Irvin replaces Bill Tobin as coach. At a game on New Years' Eve, the Blackhawks began their long journey to the Stanley Cup Playoffs by beating the Philadelphia Quakers, 10-3. In midseason, the Blackhawks were stuck in second place behind the Boston Bruins. Eventually, however, the Blackhawks entered the Stanley Cup Playoffs. Johnny Gottslied became the team's scoring leader and Charlie Gardiner set a record of 78 goals so the Blackhawks were ready to go to the playoffs. In their first round against Toronto, the score was tied 2-2 and they beat the Maple Leafs, 4-3. At the last game before the playoffs, the Blackhawks played against Montreal and unfortunately lost, 2-0.

During 1931, McLaughlin's poor team ownership skills caused Coach Irvin to be fired when the Blackhawks came in third for the American Division. Bill Tobin was coach again. At the end of the year the Blackhawk record was 18-19-11. Over 18,000 fans jammed Chicago Stadium for the second game of the 1931 finals. This set a new single-game record.

Godfrey Matheson coached in 1932 and had no experience as an NHL coach. His strategy was to play six men and sit the rest on the bench. Due to this, he was fired by Bill Tobin, the new manager. Iverson was replaced by Tommy German. The Blackhawks finished last in the American Division after a 16-20-12 record. On March 13, 1933, the Blackhawks made history.

They refused to play when their coach, Tommy German, was ejected by the referee. Boston unfairly was given the win 1-0. More history was made when the first afternoon game was played in Chicago Stadium. Chicago won 4-3 against Detroit. Still, the Blackhawks had not won the Stanley Cup, but that time would come soon.

The climax of 1934 was the Stanley Cup Finals. After difficult training at the University of Illinois, the Blackhawks got to the playoffs. Chicago beat Montreal and won over Detroit three games to one. On April 10, the final game in Chicago against Detroit ended in a win. After defeating the Detroit Redwings, Chicago had won the Stanley Cup for the first time. However, Chicago had an advantage. WiifCude, the Detroit Coach, had been emotional and threw a hockey stick at the wall. By the time it landed, I'd retired," he said. Later on that year, Charles Gardiner won the Vezina Trophy for allowing the fewest goals of any NHL goalie.

Eight weeks after the win of the Stanley Cup, unfortunately, Charles Gardiner died from a brain tumor at age 29 on June 13, 1934. In 1935, Glen Loughlin became the Blackhawks' new coach. Lome Cabot, Howie Morenz, and Marty Burke were traded from the Montreal Canadians. In his first year, Lome Cabot won the Vezina Trophy. However, Howie Morenz scored 8 goals in 48 games. The Blackhawks finished in second place for the American Division. In the first round of the Stanley Cup Playoffs the Blackhawks lost to Montreal. For the season, the Blackhawks landed in third place in the American Division with a 21-6-8 record.

The Chicago Blackhawks are a franchise rich with history. The Blackhawks began as a failing hockey team although they were one of the NHL's original six franchises. Through seventy-five years, Chicago has pulled together some great athletes in hockey. Their spirit lifted the dreams and voices of many Chicagoans. The Blackhawks' first decade was probably the best one out of the seventy-seven years they have been playing. [From Chicago Blackhawks

“Chicago Blackhawks’ Timeline,” www.geocities.com/Coliseum/3815/history, (Nov. 18, 2003);

Chicago Blackhawks “The Birth of the Chicago Blackhawks,”

www.geocities.com/Coliseum/3815/history (Nov. 18, 2003); Chicago Blackhawks “The

McLaughlin Years,” www.chicagoblackhawks.com/history; (Nov. 18, 2003); Paul Greenland,

Hockey Chicago Style; Vartan Kupelian, Chicago Blackhawks; Brian McFarlane, The

Blackhawks; Gerald L. Pfeiffer, Chicago Blackhawks Sixty Year History 1926-1986.]